

Congressman Larsen's Work on House Armed Services Committee Oversight of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Congress has a responsibility to serve as a check and balance on the president and his administration. As a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am focused on conducting oversight of the Department of Defense's work on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am also a member of the United States Delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA).

ISSUE

MY WORK IN CONGRESS

House Armed Services Committee (HASC)

- April 15: received an update from Navy leadership on their COVID-19 response following the outbreak of the virus onboard USS Theodore Roosevelt.
- April 16: joined a HASC member call with Ellen Lord, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, to learn how DoD is leveraging the Defense Production Act and executing policies and procedures in support of the Defense Industrial Base. Highlighted need for Personal Protective Equipment in Washington state.
- April 23: received an update from DoD and the Department of State on the security situation in Afghanistan, an update on U.S. military operations in the region, and the status of the peace process.
- May 13: received an update on the national security challenges and U.S. force posture in the INDOPACOM area of responsibility. Highlighted importance of building relationships in the region.
- May 15: received a classified update on the current status of ISIS and U.S. military activities in Iraq and Syria.
- May 20: received an update on national security challenges and military readiness and posture on the Korean Peninsula.

Subcommittee on Intelligence and Emerging Threats and Capabilities (IETC)

- April 9: received an update how the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency was leveraging federal research funding to develop a COVID-19 vaccine and new medical equipment to fight the virus.
- April 17: learned about Citizens Lab's work on China's censorship and disinformation about COVID-19.
- April 30: received an update from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the DASD for Chemical and Biological Defense on COVID-19 efforts. Focused comments on development of decontamination technology and collaboration with NATO allies.

Advocacy

- March 16: urged the Secretary of Defense to support DoD personnel and offered additional resources should the DoD be called upon to provide support for national COVID-19 response efforts.
- March 18: urged the president to consider Governor Inslee's request to deploy USNS Mercy to the Puget Sound region.
- March 20: implored House and Senate Leadership to consider the needs of servicemembers and their families and dedicate resources in the stimulus towards military medical facilities.
- April 1: requested Navy leadership outline the steps taken to address COVID-19 on the USS Theodore Roosevelt and all ships, and enact clear and effective guidance across the fleet to manage and respond to COVID-19.
- April 10: asked Secretary Mnuchin and Secretary Pompeo to clarify that current U.S. sanctions on Iran do not apply to humanitarian aid.
- April 17: requested House Leadership support food security for low-income military families during COVID-19
- April 17: urged the president to leverage DoD resources for COVID-19 response.

- April 23: requested the Defense Health Agency expand TRICARE coverage of telehealth services during COVID-19, especially tele-mental health.
- May 7: urged the president to support Washington state request to extend Title 32 authority and funding until the end of June in order to support critical National Guard missions. On May 9 the president announced he will be extending Title 32 authorities until June 24.
- May 20: urged the president to further extend Washington state's Title 32 authority and funding until July 31 to support National Guard missions and prepare to gradually transition operations from the National Guard to the civilian workforce without an abrupt and harmful end date.

NATO PA

- April 27: discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected NATO's missions and how the alliance has responded with experts from the Congressional Research Service, Atlantic Council and Center for Strategic and International Studies
- May 7: joined a NATO PA webinar with other members of the assembly from around the world to learn how NATO was responding and coordinating with its partners and allies to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

Global Health Security

- January 2020: Introduced legislation establishing a grant program for states to better prepare communities against seasons flu by increasing vaccination rates.
- January 2020: Introduced legislation requiring the White House to update its plan to prepare for and respond to a flu pandemic.
- March 2020: During Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations, supported additional funding for influenza planning and response, opposing cuts to CDC global health security efforts to train frontline health workers, laboratory technicians and disease detectives.